BALLET TODAY

JANUARY 1951

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DITORIAL COMMENT

rst of all, a Happy New Year and Good Ballet-Going all my readers.

Adieu to Robert Helpmann

News that Robert Helpmann had left Sadler's Wells llet at the conclusion of their San Francisco engage-ent did not come altogether as a surprise though we ould all, I know, have liked to have had an opportu-ty of saying goodbye to him in many of his famous les during a farewell season at the Royal Opera ouse. However, film commitments wait for no an. It has been obvious for several years that Help-ann no longer found sufficient outlet in Ballet alone r his almost bewildering array of talents and he is undoubtedly wise to make a clean break which leaves him free for stage and screen at an age when the impossibility of keeping in constant practice must inevitably make itself shown in his dancing. For seventeen years he has reigned undisputed English *premier danseur* and in the next issue of *Ballet Today* there will be a special feature showing him in some of the many roles in which he triumphed. Our good wishes will follow him in whatever direction his future path may lie.

London's Loss is Milan's Gain

Another great loss to English Ballet came with the departure of Madame Vera Volkova who left early in December to take up the position of Artistic Director to La Scala, Milan, ballet school and company. The Directors of La Scala feel the time is ripe for a revival of Ballet in the country which a century ago led the world. In her comparatively few years in this country Madame Volkova became so renowned as a teacher that dancers from all over the world came to her studio in West Street. It is not too much to say that, had it not been for her studies with Volkova, Margot Fonteyn would not, during the past three years, have achieved that final perfection which has earned her an international reputation as the *prima ballerina assoluta* of the day. Madame Volkova's fame as a teacher is such that probably no one outside the immediate ballet circle realised that she had no actual official position in English ballet—she was purely and simply a teacher with her own school to whom dancers

(Continued on page 22)

ALICIA MARKOVA
AND
ANTON DOLIN
IN
THE SECOND ACT
OF
" GISELLE "

ction photograph
y Roger Wood

FESTIVAL BALLET AT THE STOLL

ONE'S first impression of this new company which made its bow to London on October 24th is of rawness and the exuberance of inexperienced youth. Apart from its stars, few of the dancers have had much stage experience and the general feeling is that of an "end of term" performance more notable for enthusiasm than professional polish.

The season opened with *Nutcracker* in its entirety. As readers of *Ballet Today* know, I find it hard enough to bear in its single act form. With the addition of the Prologue and first act it becomes almost impossible. George Kirsta's colour schemes for the St. Petersburg drawing-room are ugly but possibly he tried to incorporate as much variety as possible into the decor knowing how very little there was in the choreography. Most of the dancers in the Prologue are handicapped by having to pretend either that they are very much older or very much younger than they actually are, and I would not care to say which is the more painful to watch. It is a great relief to have the unashamedly middle-aged Nicholas Beriosoff as Dr. Drosselmeyer. The one bright spot in this act is the dance of the Vivandière and the Drummer by Anita Landa and Keith Beckett, though Noel Rossana has a suitably little-girl charm as Clara here and all through the ballet.

The fight between the mice and the Nutcracker army being omitted, we have only the entrance of the transformed Nutcracker Prince between the Prologue and the Land of Snowflakes, but what an entrance it is when Dolin is the Prince! Here is all the grandeur which the term "*danseur noble*" implies: and then what a first view of Markova standing alone in the middle of the bare stage like the personification of all the classical ballerinas that ever were! The *grand pas de deux* has been considerably whittled away since we first saw this pair dance it less than two years ago and the Snowflakes are not nearly up to their task, so that this act seems cold comfort indeed. The last act decor gives no indication of a Kingdom of Sweets and the individual items, though adequately danced, give me no more pleasure than they usually do, except of course for Markova, this generation's Sugar Plum Fairy.

Le Beau Danube in what I am afraid I always think of as "the wrong decor" is typical of the "end of term" atmosphere. Everyone goes at it with the utmost spirit but only Nathalie Krassovska (who appeared as guest artist for the first month) and Anna Cheselka as the First Hand really have the measure of it. Beriosoff is a fine character mime but not, alas, a comedian, so his Strong Man does not help as much as it should. John Gilpin, though he dances it beautifully, is woefully miscast as the Hussar since he is quite unable t look old enough to have forgotten an affair. Indee he puts one irresistibly in mind of the St. Cyr cadet Alexander Woolcott's classic story. Louis Godfre as the Dandy cannot, naturally, compete with th incomparable Shabelevsky, nor for that matter wit Lichine, Lazovsky or the more recent Celada. H again is years too young. Here one pauses to wonde why Russian dancers in their early twenties alway looked like young men, whereas our dancers of th same age still seem to be in the schoolcap and satche era as far as their stage appearance is concerned. O the other hand, I can imagine Keith Beckett, who i certainly very young, developing into a first rat character dancer who, even now, does not loo ridiculous in a false moustache and grease paint ag lines. His Manager is a genuinely funny creation.

However, we cannot but be grateful to Festiva Ballet for this revival since it has given us anothe opportunity of marvelling at the changeless Massin who came back for some performances of the Hussa and was dancing better than at any time since he firs returned three years ago for the Sadler's Wells revival of *The Three-Cornered Hat*. It was good to see the way in which the young dancers drank in every movement with open eyes (and even open mouths).

He also appeared in *Petrouchka*, and though I have never considered this one of his great parts (it is a strange fact that the finest interpreters of the "Russian soul" from its creator onwards have always been Poles), he gave the ballet a cohesion and a meaning that it otherwise lacked. Dolin (the best Blackamoor I have ever seen) does not get to the heart of Petrouchka though it is a sincere portrayal by someone who understands the role better than it is within his temperamental compass to interpret it. Both Krassovska and Markova in their quite different styles characterised the Doll most successfully, and then one almost comes to the end of finding anything to praise.

It is probably impossible for any company outside Russia to find anything in *Petrouchka* to inspire them. It has become a legend the meaning of which has been forgotten. When it was created in 1911, the Diaghilev Ballet Russe was still very close to its own country and even as late as its revival by the Col. de Basil Company there remained many links with the original production so that, although much was lost, a great deal still remained. This is no longer so, and all that is left is a rather ramshackle scaffolding enclosing such blurred details as the long memories of a few people can piece together. The dancers are conscientious and do exactly what they are told with a

NATALIE KRASSOVSKA AND NICHOLAS BERIOSOFF IN "LE BEAU DANUBE"

Photograph by Denis de Marney

grim devotion which is almost appalling, but the result never begins to look like a fair in the Admiralty Square in old St. Petersburg. As an example, two girls dressed as cadets, and looking exactly like two girls dressed as cadets, march right across the stage and when they reach the other side they simply stand; there was no reason why they should ever have started, but someone remembered that there used to be two cadets so there they were. And alas and alas for the Nursemaids whose dance in the last scene used to be the beginning of the tremendous build up to the final tragedy. Now one hardly notices them, and their costumes, almost more than any of the others, have lost all the old Benois glory.

Having given due praise to *Giselle* in the last issue, there is little else in the repertoire for which there is much to be said except that Markova in the Prelude and *pas de deux* of *Les Sylphides* lifted an otherwise earthbound production into the regions of great art. There must also be praise for John Gilpin, whose dancing in *Nutcracker* at one or two performances was remarkable. This could be said of all his solo work, though a criticism must be that his dancing still tends to be a classroom demonstration rather than a stage performance. When he has learnt to *present* all he knows he will be a very fine dancer indeed.

I cannot conclude without paying tribute to Yvette Chauviré whose appearances in *Giselle* have given us the rare experience of watching two great Giselles within a fortnight. It is strange that an interpretation so different should, within the framework of the same production, be also so satisfying. Madame Chauviré's performance is full of small, exquisite details, and though at first it is, perhaps, a little over-coy and Parisian for our tastes, this is quickly accepted in one's admiration and delight at her charm and virtuosity. Her second act is amazing; she is not in the least ethereal but all the time one is conscious that this Giselle is dead. There is one particularly moving moment at the end of the *pas de deux* when she stands *en arabesque* (not on point) beside, instead of behind, Albrecht and gradually her outstretched arm sinks until finally her hand drops lifelessly against the folds of her dress.

The manner in which Dolin adapted his own performance to match what in many ways is so different an interpretation from Markova's deserves the highest praise.

This production of *Giselle* is Festival Ballet's one real contribution to English Ballet and it is a very important one. The directional policy at the moment seems to be to have a small, basic repertoire of standard works and to maintain public interest by inviting guest artists to appear in them. Delighted as we are to welcome these distinguished visitors, at the same time it is necessary to say that the artistic life of a company lies in its ability to mount new works of value and, above all, to foster and develop new choreographic talent. Festival Ballet has now to prove itself in this direction.

P.W.M.

* * *

During the children's Christmas holidays, Anton Dolin is appearing as St. George in a new production of *Where the Rainbow Ends* with the *corps de ballet* in the many dances which are a feature of this play. This is for matinees only, and evening performances consist of *Nutcracker* and a short new ballet, *Harlequinade*. Another season of ballet will follow immediately.

P.W.M.

News from Paris

By FERDINAND REYNA

LAST month the National American Ballet Theatre inaugurated with considerable pomp the new Teatro Manzoni in Milan—a very beautiful auditorium designed and constructed by Remigio Paone who, at the moment, is in charge of all stage performances in Italy.

After travelling over the greater part of Italy, Ballet Theatre appeared in Holland, and on November 17th opened its first Paris season at the Chaillot. The première was attended by His Excellency Mr. David Bruce, United States Ambassador, and the whole of the Paris ballet public. The programme was *Theme and Variations*, *Fall River Legend*, *The Black Swan* (Alicia Alonso and Igor Youskevitch) and *Fancy Free*. What struck everyone particularly were the perfection of the *ensemble* and the talent and superb physique of that great dancer, Youskevitch. Some critics have been a little reserved about the feminine stars of the company—Alicia Alonso and Mary Ellen Moylan: on the other hand, they have bowed before the dramatic power of Nora Kaye who brings to ballet a feeling of tragedy never before seen. One rather malicious critic claims to find in *Fancy Free* and other such typical works of this company (which are being seen in Paris for the first time) the source of Roland Petit's choreographic inspiration.

Ballet Theatre will have a month's season in Paris. Its success is undoubted and very great.

As Tamara Toumanova did not return to the Paris Opera after the company's recent appearance in South America, her role in Cocteau's *Phèdre* will be taken by Lycette Darsonval. Owing to illness, Nina Vyroubova is also absent so that performances are at the moment on the weak side. Jacqueline Moreau is attracting more and more attention with her very individual qualities of personal elegance, finish and unforced technique. Still very young, Mademoiselle Moreau is a dancer of real style.

In addition to its usual Wednesday performances of ballet, the Opera has now added one on Thursdays.

The President of the Republic, Monsieur Vincent Auriol, re-opened the Opéra Comique which had been closed for several months for alterations. The performance was dedicated to Ravel, and Leonide Massine danced *La Valse* with Solange Schwartz. This choreographer is reviving *Les Femmes de Bonne Humeur* and J.J. Etscheverry, resident choreographer, is preparing *Les Mal Aimés*, a ballet with music by Elsa Barrène. The leading role will be taken by Géneviève Kergrist.

After its New York season, Le Grand Ballet de Marquis de Cuevas will appear in Paris. Owing, it is said, to the exorbitant demands of Jean Babilée, he and his wife, Nathalie Phillipart, did not join the company for New York. (One stipulation was that Babilée should dance Albrecht to Jannine Charrat's Giselle.) I also hear that Babilée intends to form his own company. After the Paris season, Le Grand Ballet will tour the principal towns in Italy.

David Lichine continues to rehearse his company which now seems to be interesting a well-known Paris impresario. The *ensemble*, judging from rehearsals, is remarkable. Two American dancers stand out —Nikita Talin and Xenia Paley.

ALICIA MARKOVA AND ANTON DOLIN IN "SWAN LAKE"

Photograph by Houston Rogers

JOURNAL OF A JOURNEY

A Sadler's Wells Diary

By FRANKLIN WHITE

TO start a diary of our now somewhat fantastic way of life, divided between hotels, trains and theatres (or auditoriums, as so far has been the case) a fortnight late, is not the best of beginnings, but, considering the completely unusual method of touring for us, I think I can be forgiven if I pass over the last week in New York and move on to Philadelphia; having somewhat recovered from the initial plunge into a tour that is common to every American Ballet Company, yet which is totally foreign in every way to anything that we have ever done.

Start of the Tour

One day there is time for rehearsals and classes, reasonable dressing-rooms and all the equipment of a proper theatre, and the day after one is making-up in a passage under the stage, having been unable to get on the stage for even half an hour's practice, as the staff require all the limited amount of time for setting the stage between arriving in the particular town and giving the performance. Again the contrast of living in a good hotel against periods spent in the 8 x 4 cosiness of our sleeping berths, with only a limited amount of luggage, the rest being piled high in the wash-rooms of the train. There is little time to think of anything but the present, which is a type of preservation, as one works within the limitations of the moment's surroundings, good or bad, and for the time being there is no time for comparison; it will be impossible any other way, for the changes are so continual and great.

Now, on this two-day non-stop journey from Houston to Los Angeles, I will think back through the last two weeks and join up the experiences from Philadelphia onwards.

Contretemps and Coincidence

Philadelphia—These four days were rather in the form of easing into the way of life ahead of us; half tour, half season, dancing in a theatre, staying in an hotel and having the last complete day off without work or travel for practically a month to come.

For the journey from New York, we did not have our special train, the company went by a scheduled one, into which they were allowed ahead of the other passengers. At Pennsylvania Station there occurred an exact replica of our departure last year. The train departure time arrived before all the luggage was aboard and, as last year, half the luggage was left on the platform. Luckily all turned out well, apart from the uncertainty and inconvenience for some people of being luggageless until late that evening.

Nothing greatly unusual happened during our stay, except that in the theatre next door Katherine Hepburn was also being presented by Mr. Hurok, as Rosalind in

RICHARD ELLIS AND ROSEMARY LINDSAY "GO NATIVE" IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE WHILE CROSSING TEXAS

Photograph by Franklin White

As You Like It produced by Michael Benthall, with scenery by James Bailey and music by Robert Irving. Quite a coincidence, more especially as we were doing *Giselle* with Bailey's scenery and Irving conducting.

Routine of Travel

From Philadelphia onwards we really began to cover ground. There has been a change of travel plans to what I was told would happen before we left London. On two-night stands we now do not stay on the train, but go to an hotel for the first night and leave immediately after the show on the second. Only on one night do we stay in the train and again travel all night to our next destination (thank heavens I sleep like a log while moving, in fact I love all this travelling). Any luggage beyond a week-end case is not available except at stops of over three days, which only happens about half a dozen times during the whole of the five months' tour. I, like the rest of us, have not seen my big case since we left Atlanta, Georgia, and I only had it then because our train was wanted by the Railway Company during the two days there. Now it is piled up somewhere at the end of one of the Pullmans : I have not the least idea where.

The train consists of six Pullman sleeping cars with double-decked berths, stretching lengthways along the car and with a centre passage and curtains. Generally four scenery wagons complete the load, although there are other trucks for scenery which have gone on in advance of us straight to Los Angeles from New York with *The Sleeping Beauty*. A lounge car, with bar attached, has just joined us for this long journey and with perfect timing, for Sheila Nelson is celebrating her twenty-first birthday while travelling along the Texas border, marked at the place we are now passing by the Rio Grande river and beyond, the mountains of Mexico.

Performing under difficulties

Pittsburgh—After an all-night journey this was where we first got the real taste of American trans-continental touring. This was a two-night stand in a building that stood in the town centre of "Gothic" built during the last hundred years and which architecturally carried out its name of The Syria Masque. Inside it was constructed more for things like conventions, ceremonies or anything that fits the wide proscenium arch, shallow stage and large square audience space of municipal auditorium capable of holding various numbers from three to ten thousand people.

In most theatres there are usually some accommodation problems with a company as large as Sadler's Wells. Auditoriums were naturally not built with the special needs of a ballet company in mind, especially if, as is often the case, it is the only large place of presentation in the town which has to cope with every need from opera to wrestling matches and are adapted for one of these uses every night: consequently at the Syria Masque the girls made up in the few available dressing-rooms and most of the boys found themselves sharing a sparsely-lit and unmirrored communicating passage under the stage with the male wardrobe and all and everyone who had to pass from one side of the stage to the other; the shallowness of it preventing any passing behind the backcloth. This proved on occasions to be rather comic, as close-following entrances and exits allowed little enough time for such diversions as going under the stage, and periodically streams of dancers came racing through with little warning. If we were in the way it was just too bad!

As we drove to the station after the last performance, we passed along the crest of the hill overlooking one of the giant blast furnaces, the flames of which make the sky over Pittsburgh at night resemble those of London during the dock fires of 1940.

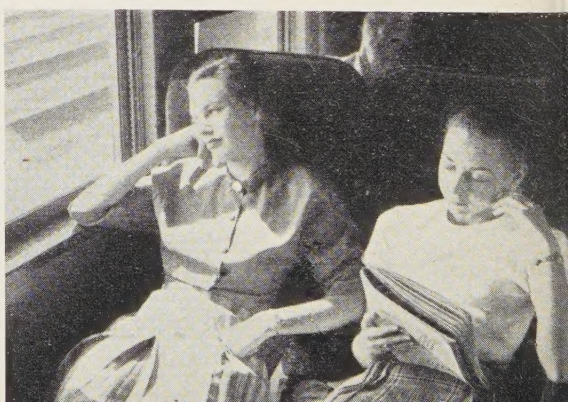
Down in the station a little touch was added to our departure : over the track gates was chalked " Welcome to Sadler's Wells ".

SOME OF THE COMPANY ON THE WAY TO THE LAKESIDE BEACH IN NEW ORLEANS

Photograph by Bryan Ashbridge

PAULINE CLAYDEN AND ROSEMARY LINDSAY ON THE COMPANY TRAIN

Photograph by Bryan Ashbridge



Photograph by Bryan Ashbridge

ROBERT HELPMANN, WITH ALEXANDER GRANT AND ROWENA JACKSON IN THE BACKGROUND AT THE SHAMROCK HOTEL, HOUSTON

Photograph by Franklin White

ALEXIS RASSINE DOING "BARRE" PRACTICE UP A DATE PALM AT YULMA, NEW MEXICO

Photograph by Bryan Ashbridge

MARGOT FONTEYN AT THE SHAMROCK SWIMMING POOL, HOUSTON, TEXAS

Our first glimpse of the South

Atlanta—Here we were in the biggest auditorium yet. So vast was it that, by removing what in comparison with the remainder a small patch of seats, scenery lorries drove in and unloaded straight on to the stage. Here also we saw for the first time special entrances and sections set aside for "Black" or "White" only.

As usual on the first day we were not able to get near the stage until the performance, so we used the gymnasium of the Alabama State College, working beneath the basketball nets and with a large audience of students. On the second day, friends of Nadia Nerina's took us to their farm for a Georgia breakfast, some way outside Atlanta and only a mile from the home of the late Margaret Mitchell who, of course, was the author of "Gone With the Wind". I think it was one of the most enjoyable parties of the tour, as we ate eggs and bacon garnished with preserved Georgia peaches and Grits, a fine rice-like substance, in the gardens and under the jasmine-covered veranda of the red brick and white pillared colonial house. On the tables everywhere inside were festoons of red-orange roses and strong-scented gardenias. A large bowl of cotton plants had been placed on the table by our hostess, realising that few of us if any would ever have seen this plant growing in its natural state. Just before returning for a matinee, we were taken to the cotton fields themselves, where in the blazing sun we all turned pickers for the moment and were told stories of the pleasures of the almost invisible red bug to be found in these fields, which we were told had the nice habit of borrowing itself deep under one's skin!

Birmingham—Our first one-night stand. It was here that we were advertised for the first time along with the wrestling matches. It took place at the same auditorium every Monday!

The fabulous New Orleans

New Orleans—How can I describe our visit to this fabulous place? I know that we were there far too short a time, on top of which the train was late owing to a diversion, although it did give us more time to see in daylight the alligator and snake infested swamps of Louisiana, thick with semi-submerged trees and vegetation, half-petrified and hanging in long, thick wisps of Spanish Moss, which lives on the trees themselves. Among all this, derricks and pumps gave away the fact of oil lying under all.

Once there, I think most of us were on the go continuously, making use of every precious minute. Trips on the Mississippi, drinks in the Patio at Pat O'Brien's, at Jack Lefitte's Old Blacksmith's Shack, meals at Antoine's and at the Court of Two Sisters, eating under the banana trees with their ripening fruit hanging overhead; wandering about the old French and Negro sections, with the children playing all over the streets in the latter section and their parents sitting in groups on the doorsteps or standing by the open doors leading into lamp-lit bed and living rooms of their often dilapidated wooden homes. In front of yet

another large auditorium were the first date palms I had ever seen. Then, having only been in New Orleans a few hours and wandering under the overhanging buildings of the French section with their thin supporting pillars often hanging with a pink flowering creeper making a covered way, there appeared around the corner of the famous Bourbon Street, a bus bearing one single wore "Desire". My evening was completely made, as knowing that the old street-car had been taken off, I had not thought of a bus taking over that service and this was the last thing that I expected to see. Not much sleep was had on the one night there. Time was too valuable with the many famous night clubs still to be visited. At Dixie's, our hostess had been to the Ballet and in return presented us with that powerful local drink "Sazanac", in which a drop of absinthe is added, being first rolled in the glass, once for a gentleman, twice for a lady, before adding the rest of the powerful mixture.

A much needed rest

Houston—After New Orleans, let alone the rest of the tour since what already seems so distant Philadelphia, we needed a rest and circumstances provided this to perfection. The hotel was a luxury one, the Shamrock, some half an hour's drive outside the town. In spite of yet another ball game and consequently four to a room for most people, everything was perfection, best of all the palm-surrounded outdoor swimming pool, for the temperature was well in the eighties with a clear cloudless sky. All that many of us saw of the auditorium was for the three performances, the rest of the time was spent from early morning onwards in and out of that heavenly pool. Perhaps it was as well that there was a matinee, for, as it was, sunburn has turned many people as red as cherries, and how it stings! But it was well worth it!

We have been well received everywhere, but here in Houston the warmth of the audience seemed to be immense.

The longest journey begins

Briefly, this brings things up to this journey of some two thousand miles, taking from 2 a.m. Sunday night until 6.30 to-night, Tuesday, our longest journey of the tour. Sleepers are usually converted into sitting cars during the day, but with deference to the fact that sleep would play a large part in this trip, that idea must have been considered impractical and the berths remained in place all day. Even so, on an interesting trip like this one, the temptation to be awake and at a place where one can both see and take photographs (for the company has now a small army of photographers) is great and much time is spent lying by the windows of the lower berths (the uppers are windowless) or standing by the open section of the coach doors or at the open back of the train, with the mostly single line track often stretching as far as eye can see. The lounge car is proving a great asset, not forgetting its ever open bar, where groups of dancers, orchestra and staff sit around writing letters or keeping going interminable games of what by reason of its horrifying fascination might be termed "the new vice"—Canasta.

Late next day after leaving Houston, the company began to drift into the diners, dressed in the most informal and comfortable clothes, bright coloured shirts and blue jeans being very much in order. The poor dining staff! From the start the meals took on unusual hours, with breakfast at mid-day and lunch still going at five. By now we were right in the scrubland of Texas, with its sandy soil covered with a thick scraggy bush going on for hundreds of miles. One thing that struck me about this part was that it was not as flat as I had expected, in fact there was a predominance of fair-sized hills, but these gave little sense of variation, as they were all covered to the same degree with scrub like the lowlands. Even more ununusual was the effect when we ran into a swarm of hundreds of large fritillary butterflies of a type that are only occasionally found in England, yet here all around me they were more common than our Cabbage Whites.

A lot of the time we followed the banks of the Rio Grande, and always within a comparatively short distance of Mexico. I find it an odd idea to be able to look at some two thousand miles of a country without ever having been in it; not even at El Paso right on the border, where we stopped for some time while a fruitless attempt was made to repair the air cooling system in one coach, the heat of which drove out all of us who used it. And no wonder: for at a mid-day stop at Yuma on the Colorado river border of New Mexico and California we were picking up fruit from beneath a date tree and buying souvenirs from Indians who lined the platforms or sat in the station garden, in a temperature of 102 degrees. That reflected on our sleeping car from those hundreds of miles of desert with so few oases was not too pleasant.

Most of New Mexico we passed through in the night and it was early morning by the time we crossed into Arizona and those miles of desert sands, bare rock mountains and patches of tall angular cactus plants. How sad to cross such an interesting state and not have an opportunity to see the Grand Canyon, the Painted Desert or the Petrified Forest.

California at last

Occasionally we stopped at an oasis to take in water and pile blocks of ice into the train's cooling system. At the last of these, somewhere over the California border but still in the desert, we wandered around in

(*continued on page 15*)

AND PETIT AND RENEE JEANMAIRE IN "LA CROQUEUSE DE DIAMANTS"

RENEE JEANMAIRE IN "LA CROQUEUSE DE DIAMANTS"

ASSORTED FLAVOURS

ROLAND PETIT'S "LA CROQUEUSE DE DIAMANTS" BRIGHTENS THE NEW YORK SEASON AS THE MARQUIS DE CUEVAS' GRAND BALLET MAKES AN INAUSPICIOUS RETURN

By ARTHUR TODD

THE tremendous hit made by Roland Petit's new work, *La Croqueuse de Diamants* (*The Diamond Crusher*) and the return of some favoured American dancers with the Marquis de Cuevas Grand Ballet have been New York's chief balletic diversions since the much regretted departure of the Sadler's Wells Ballet from the Met.

Petit's season at the National Theatre, which opened in mid-October minus Renée Jeanmaire, who was still convalescing, featured Colette Marchand in *Carmen* and *L'Oeuf à la Coque* as well as the rest of the company in a première of *Les Forains*. Marchand's Folies-Bergère performance in *L'Oeuf à la Coque* was still a delight of its kind but in *Carmen* she was lacking in the tempestuous fire and sultry fierceness that Jeanmaire brings to the role. Roland Petit now over-plays the Don José role to the extent that it is just short of mugging or ham acting. *Les Forains* turned out to be a pleasant but inconsequential trifle and in spots it was touching, tender and eloquent though over-long.

As soon as Jeanmaire arrived in America, she rejoined the company and on October 31st appeared in the American première of *La Croqueuse de Diamants* and both she and the ballet scored an instantaneous hit. Certainly this new work of Petit's is the most important ballet composed in a contemporary style since *Fancy Free* burst over the horizon in 1944. It is important because it is a fresh, new form that combines pantomime, a mixture of dance styles and song successfully and it is, consequently, a major forward step towards a new theatrical form that might be labelled lyric theatre. As a result, Petit finally emerges as a choreographer to be reckoned with and this work will undoubtedly have a strong influence in

the international dance world. Its programme note reads: The scene is Les Halles, the famous Paris early morning wholesale market where a bistro proprietor (Gordon Hamilton) dreams of attracting an elegant clientèle by installing in his bar-restaurant a luxurious red plush divan. When the delivery boy (Roland Petit) arrives with the *banquette*, it is too large to fit the dining room, and a hole has to be knocked in the wall to accommodate it. The hole leads the boy to a gang of crooks headed by La Croqueuse (Renée Jeanmaire), a woman who steals diamonds not to wear or to sell, but to eat, like children crunch candy. The boy wins the heart of La Croqueuse and they settle down to "love in a cottage" or as the French put it "to find diamonds in cabbages".

Quite possibly *La Croqueuse de Diamants* may not find favour with some ballet purists while others will find this fifty minute work to be more or less like a miniature musical comedy. Certainly it is not a pure ballet but, whatever you want to term it, it has proved to be the most stimulating and exciting work being performed in New York at this writing. Ethel Merman's new smash hit musical, *Call Me Madam*, seems tame and lifeless in comparison and it is safe to predict that when *La Croqueuse de Diamants* finally arrives in London it will be a sensational hit.

The whole work is essentially Parisian in tone, mood, feeling and *nuance* and could only have been created in France. The scenery and costumes by Georges Wakhevitch are in marvellous taste. The scenery deserves special credit since it is such a functional part of the ballet with its centre section revolving to take us from the market street inside the bistro then to the quarters of *La Croqueuse* and, finally, back to the street again. Jean-Michel Damese's score seems equally suited to the proceedings.

As The Boy, Petit gives a fine performance and his engagingly boyish pantomime and Chevalier-type singing are on a par with his dancing. Gordon Hamilton, likewise, has never been seen to better advantage in America and he is equally proficient at putting across a song. It is Renée Jeanmaire, however, who emerges as a major and a magnificent theatre personality. She sings like Piaf—husky, plaintive but more melodious and she dances more divinely than ever, especially in her long solo and again in a *pas de deux* with Petit that is full of inventive and exciting lifts and turns.

Also on the bill with *La Croqueuse de Diaments* was Petit's *Les Chaises Musicales*, a balletic interpretation that employed three couples in the old parlour game. This seemed over-long despite its melodic George Auric score, its flashes of imaginative choreography and the central performances of pert Belinda Wright and boyish Oleg Briansky.

The Marquis de Cuevas Grand Ballet ushered in its four week New York season at the Century Theatre on October 30th with an impressive array of socialites on hand to celebrate the return of such favourites as Rosella Hightower, André Eglevsky, George Skibine and Marjorie Tallchief. The repertoire of novelties and classics featured seven American premières which included John Tara's *Persephone*, Ana Ricarda's *Del Amor y de la Muerte*, George Skibine's *A Tragedy in Verona*, Rosella Hightower's *Salome*, Bronislava Nijinska's *Les Biches*, David Lichine's *The Enchanted Mill*, and John Taras's *The Debutantes*.

Of the six works premièred at this writing (John Taras's *The Debutantes* opened too late for inclusion in this review), Ana Ricarda's *Del Amor y de la Muerte* was far and away the most outstanding. As danced by choreographer Ricarda, Marjorie Tallchief and George Skibine, this eternal triangle story emerged as an exciting and generally successful blend of Spanish and balletic movement. The Ernest Schelling arrangement of the Granados score seemed an appropriate choice and Celia Hubbard's moody settings were more outstanding than her overly lavish costumes. (This company, incidentally, seems to have a fetish for sequins, feathers, rhinestones, beads and glitter that is often disturbing. This is especially true of Rosella Hightower's Black Swan costume where long feathers on her gloves almost ruin the line of her arms.) Next in interest was George Skibine's *A Tragedy in Verona* with choreographer Skibine as Romeo and Ethery Pagava as Juliet in a pocket-size version of the Shakespearean

ETHERY PAGAVA AND GEORGE SKIBINE IN "NIGHT SHADOW"
Photograph by Lido

Photograph by Roger Wood

A SCENE FROM SKIBINE'S FIRST BALLET, "A TTAGEDY IN VERONA"

tragedy. Though it was a fine first work and beautifully danced by Skibine, it just isn't comparable to Tudor's magnificent *Romeo and Juliet*. Much that should have been essential in the plot was omitted, the Tchaikovsky score seemed banal at times due, possibly, to the recent use of some of its melodies by dance bands in America, and Ethery Pagava was a buxom and rather self-centred Juliet. Skibine, however, has returned to America as a remarkably fine dancer who also shows considerable promise as a choreographer and one can hope that he will be encouraged to continue in this field.

Mme. Bronislava Nijinska's *Les Biches* was, of course, of special interest because this marked the first time that this twenty six year old ballet has been seen in America. Though its choreographic approach of blending balletic and modern movement is no longer a novelty, there was much to admire in conception and pattern and Marjorie Tallchief as the Page Boy and George Skibine as one of the male athletes danced very well indeed.

Considerably less noteworthy were Rosella Hightower's self-choreographed solo piece, *Salome*, and David Lichine's *The Enchanted Mill*. Though well danced technically, Miss Hightower's *Salome* seemed an odd compound of *plastique*, classic, modern and acrobatic dance. This eight minute solo to the Strauss score was backed by Celia Hubbard's decor which showed Herod in silhouette and, at the conclusion, a prop moon that turned blood-red as a fluorescent head of John the Baptist emerged in the decor. Ruth St. Denis's revival of *Salome* at Carnegie Hall earlier this season was not only theatrically more valid but infinitely more moving and believable. David Lichine's *The Enchanted Mill*, a story of a boy who dreams and awakes again to accept reality, was weary, stale, flat, dated and full of clichés. Ethery Pagava, as the Girl, danced entirely to the audience, ignoring the rest of the cast, and Serge Golovine's much mascara-ed make-up detracted a great deal from his technical though still undisciplined bravura style.

Of course it was wonderful to see many familiar faces again and is therefore sad to report that the company is otherwise dangerously lacking in many vital aspects. Most evident is the lack of a strong and consistent directorial policy and, as a result, styles and techniques are wildly at variance, programmes are poorly assembled and even the orchestra offers strange and peculiar shifts of tempo. The *corps de ballet* is generally ragged, undisciplined and rarely achieves any unity of style and this is especially evident in the Balanchine works. The principals were overworked (Marjorie Tallchief appeared in four ballets the evening Rosella Hightower suffered a minor leg injury) and, worse still, some of the dancers have fallen into the habit of over-projection. Though the Grand Ballet claims to be an American company (it had its inception originally in New York as Ballet International in 1944), it boasts no contemporary works that reflect the native scene or mood as does the New York City Ballet Company and Ballet Theatre. What the company needs most is a genius like de Valois to weld it into being and utilise the considerable talents and assets that are still on hand.

Despite its many weaknesses, the Grand Ballet also provided a fair share of excitement. Among these

highspots were Balanchine's elegantly brittle *Pas de Trois Classique* that seemed essentially composed to highlight aspects of Hightower, Tallchief and Eglevsky and all three danced this work superbly. Almost equally brilliant, from technical aspects only, were the Hightower and Eglevsky *Black Swan* and *Nutcracker pas de deux*; also, Tallchief's and Skibine's lyrically elegant *Don Quixote pas de deux*. Most memorable of all, perhaps, was Rosella Hightower's really magnificent *Giselle* which was performed with little or no support from the *ensemble*.

The New York City Ballet Company opened their three week "Welcome Home" fall season at the New York City Center on November 21st with Hugh Laing and Diana Adams prominent in the company for the first time and with three new works by Balanchine—a revival of *Baiser de la Fée*, a new *pas de deux* to Delibes' *Sylvia* score and a *Mazurka* from Glinka's *A Life For The Czar*. More on all these next month. Meanwhile, warm holiday greetings and New Year greetings from America.

PLEASE, A CHOREOGRAPHERS' WORKSHOP

By FRANK JACKSON

IT was *Caprichos*, performed by Ballet Theatre, which made crystal clear to me the urgent necessity for an experimental ballet organisation in this country. For myself, I found the ballet pretentious and ineffectual bearing only the most superficial relation to the Goya etchings which are supposed to have inspired it, but the fact remains that there is nowhere in this country where a young, or neglected, choreographer can have the opportunity to put his work on the stage which was given to Herbert Ross, in his very early twenties, by the Choreographers' Workshop in America, which first produced *Caprichos*.

The Sadler's Wells Ballet, scorning the degrees by which it ascended, is now far too big and important to take chances with newcomers, although there would be no Sadler's Wells Ballet if there had been no Ballet Club to take such chances, and although many of its productions by established choreographers have turned out disastrous and expensive failures.

And the second company, at Sadler's Wells, which might have been as much a training ground for new choreographers, musicians and artists as it was originally for dancers, is rapidly becoming too grand, too set and smug. The International, which, in its early days, found a place for many small, new and often interesting works in its repertoire, seems to have the sole aim now of becoming the poor man's Maryinsky.

There are several other smaller companies, notably, of course, the Rambert, which are less averse to giving young and inexperienced choreographers their chance, but they are often hampered by lack of funds or by a shortage of good dancers—and, as a result, by variable artistic standards. There is always the danger, too, that the smaller companies, instead of making bold or novel use of their resources, try to ape the standards and outlook of the larger companies, with unhappy results.

But the tragedy is that unless we can discover new choreographers, and quickly, our ballet is likely to become a scentless hothouse product, without healthy roots. We cannot for ever depend on visitors to swell the tiny parade of native choreographers who are "safe" enough to be entrusted with either of the Wells Companies.

And, inside this narrow circle, it is not only would-be choreographers who are frustrated, but dancers too. The world is wide and there are many marvels in it, but how few of them are considered suitable subject matter for our ballets. A restricted repertoire means that dancers are forced to submit to the prevailing style and, in consequence, develop only that tiny part of their capabilities and personalities which suit the works they have to dance. Have we not seen, time and time again, how a new choreographer discovers unsuspected talent in the Wells Company which, more often than not, is allowed to sink back into obscurity again once that occasional demand has been met.

This restriction in style and subject matter affects the audience too. It was one of the chief joys for me of the Ballet Theatre repertoire that most of it was quite unsuitable for children. Our own timid repertoire seems to aim at the immature, the self-deceived, the dreamers and lunatics.

I was therefore all the happier to learn that steps are, in fact, afoot to set up a Ballet Workshop in London, and I wish this venture every success. The leading spirits, Angela Dukes and David Ellis, have issued a statement of the aims of the new group which seems to me both sound and workable. What follows, then, is no criticism, direct or indirect, of Ballet Workshop, but my own personal ideas on the scope of an organisation of this kind.

Most important, it seems to me, is a readiness to

xperiment, thematically and technically, without any race of *parti pris*. The function of a Workshop is NOT to provide ballets for the repertoires of the big ompanies, though, some day, the big companies night care to include such works in their programmes. At the same time, such open-mindedness must clearly not extend so far that all artistic standards are submerged or that the Workshop becomes the happy hunting ground of cranks and failures.

Such an organisation will, of course, cost money nd these costs will have to be met if the organisation is to live. But its life would not be worth-while if t got the money by making so many concessions to what has become public taste in this country that it only presents works which are pale copies of ballets already popular.

It will do no harm if a proportion of the new works presented is frankly controversial. I could sympathise with any young choreographer who felt that audiences had become so *bourgeois* that he must *épater* them! All the same, novelty for its own sake is not a healthy trend and is to be avoided as much as possible. The right balance is indeed difficult to strike, but I see no reason why it should prove impossible.

Such an organisation will give an opportunity not only to choreographers but to musicians, dancers and designers who feel that their talents are not being fully exploited elsewhere. This is bound to make for a healthier atmosphere in our ballet world as long as the Workshop avoids the extremes of becoming either a free-for-all or a clique.

And it makes no matter if the Workshop produces but one masterpiece, or even none at all. What really counts is that, at last, there will be a place where much valuable energy which is at present frustrated can be put to more constructive use. Why, some day we may even have our own *Caprichos* in the Sadler's Wells repertoire (heaven forbid!) or our own *Pillar of Fire* or *Rodeo*. What we shall have in our repertoire *without* a Choreographers' Workshop I shudder to think.

International Ballet

Here is the itinerary for the next two months:

January 8th, for two weeks.
Empire Theatre, Cardiff.

February 12th, for two weeks.
Streatham Hill Theatre, London.

February 26th, for one week.
De Montfort Hall, Leicester.

March 5th, for two weeks.
Golders Green Hippodrome, London

Yat Malmgren, a young Swedish dancer who has been appearing with Vera Verchinina in Rio de Janeiro, has joined the company and is dancing important solo parts.

Photograph by Walter E. Owen

ROSELLA HIGHTOWER IN THE SECOND ACT OF "GISELLE"

Journal of a Journey—(*continued from page* 10)

the shade of tall banana and date palms, dotted with various types of cactus and bushes of brilliant highly-scented red and white flowers, which I believe were of the Mimosa family.

Not long afterwards we came upon an irrigation scheme where water is pumped up from a lake lying over two hundred feet below sea level and turning desert into green valleys with miles of orange groves. A sharp line divides where completely arable land ends and desert sands begin.

Now we are nearly at the end of this journey: once more passing through pleasant green country, with orange and date groves and fields bordered with avenues of Eucalyptus trees scattered among various types of tall Palm trees. Over the high mountains and covering all with a red-orange tinge, is the most brilliant sunset that I have ever seen.

Now we are at the West Coast, entirely new ground for us and soon to discover whether the success of the past can once more be repeated.

The Roger Wood photograph on the cover is of Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet in "Assembly Ball". Patricia Miller, David Blair and Maureen Bruce are in the centre

SVETLANA BERIOSOVA WITH MICHAEL HOGAN JOHN CRANKO AND DAVID BLAIR IN "ASSEMBLY BALL"

Photograph by Roger Wood

HOWARD BALLETS AT THE WELLS

By MARY CLARKE

WITH the revivals of *Assembly Ball* and *La Fête Etrange* the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet is this season showing two ballets by Andrée Howard that well deserve their place in the repertoire. In its four years of existence this company has inspired no great works and has rarely had the benefit of working with experienced choreographers but in Andrée Howard it seems to have found the choreographer who best understands its capabilities and recognises its individuality.

Assembly Ball is not one of Miss Howard's best but it suits this company admirably. It has speed, youth and high spirits but never quite disintegrates into a romp. Svetlana Beriosova dances the Lady beautifully, with an air of mystery and romanticism, and the costumes have been much improved, though hers is over-elaborate. However, David Blair is not well cast as the Master of Ceremonies for he has neither the vigour nor the staying power that the role demands.

La Fête Etrange, originally made for the London Ballet in 1940, is perhaps Miss Howard's masterpiece. It is a shifting tenuous fabric, shot through with adolescent longings and heartbreak. Sophie Fedorovitch somehow suggests in her designs the tragic currents which may underlie any gay-seeming betrothal party and her work achieves perfect synthesis with the choreography and Fauré's strange and lovely music. The company is quite capable of conveying the ballet's mood and hinting at its implications. Given a subtle and adult ballet these dancers cease to be clever children and become young artists. Elaine Fifield, in particular, who has seemed emotionally so unhappy and ineffective in her classical work, achieves a sudden outburst of feeling and gives the Bride a young, heedless warmth that is poignantly individual.

The rest of the dancers continue to develop faster than their repertoire. Pirmin Trecu is dancing *Les Rendezvous* with an exhilaration that almost blinds one to the decor; David Blair's every movement indicates a natural dancer but he is handicapped by lack of good and *suitable* roles. Svetlana Beriosova brings an unusually romantic and langourous personality while Patricia Miller has a simple and effortless, if somewhat inexpressive style. Stanley Holden is still incredibly funny as the Dago in *Facade* but as Pantalon in *Carnaval* he is completely at sea. Indeed I doubt if there is any point in reviving this ballet which depends so utterly on mature, rather sophisticated personalities. This company cannot even approach it; but, to be honest, I can't think of any other contemporary company that could.

CHILDREN IN BALLET

By KATHRINE SORLEY WALKER

TO think of children in Ballet is immediately to visualise Act I of *The Nutcracker*, with its charming background of a children's Christmas party in old Russia. There, gathered round the glittering Christmas tree—the expression of every child's dream of fairy dolls and princes—are stage boys and girls who show all the characteristics of their real-life counterparts: excitement over the party, pleasure at their presents, jealousy of their neighbour's more beautiful toy. Some are delighted with their pretty clothes, others would be more at home in every-day frocks and suits. Some shrink self-consciously behind their parents, others leap into the limelight and love to draw all the attention to themselves. Clara and Franz are strongly contrasted in character; and indeed it is essential to the story that Clara, who is led by the Nutcracker Prince through a land of snowflakes to the kingdom of sweets, should be a dreamy, gentle little girl, preoccupied with her dolls and bullied by her boisterous brother. Her nature is expressed as much in the joy and wonder with which she watches the entertainment arranged for her in Act II as in the quiet little solo while she nurses her nutcracker doll in Act I. While Franz, who flings her doll to the ground and stamps on it, is obviously the kind of little boy no-one wants to know!

These are the only two children remaining to us in the ballets of the last century, apart from the pages who attend on the kings and queens, for we can hardly include the youngest character in all ballet—the baby Princess Aurora of *The Sleeping Beauty* prologue! And children appeared rarely, if at all, before the late nineteenth century.

Children in Massine's Ballets

But earlier in the present century Massine created some children who have no superiors in exuberant and convincing life. The youngsters who invade the fantastic toyshop in Paris, and point every moment of the *divertissement* of mechanical dolls by their realistic reactions, are indeed unforgettable; and it is just as interesting to watch the five Russian children and the American girl and her brother, whenever they are on the stage, as to follow the dances performed for their benefit. Their characters and nationalities are cleverly observed and neatly reproduced. They are remarkably true to life. Massine, too, at a later date, composed a charming study of a child's imaginary encounters in *Jeux d'Enfants* (*Children's Games*), where a little girl is entranced by an athlete and a spinning top, and loses her heart to a mysterious and merry traveller. Very much the same theme—with variations—served Todd Bolender in his *Mother Goose Suite*, although in this ballet characters from fairy-tales appear for the little girl's benefit. Celia Franca's Khadra dances with the characters out of her Persian story-book, and Andrée Howard's little girl met all the curious creatures in the *Carnival of Animals*.

JUNIOR PUPILS OF THE BOLSHOI THEATRE BALLET SCHOOL, MOSCOW, DANCE "SUVOROVTSI" AT A SCHOOL CONCERT. SUVOROVTSI ARE SOVIET MILITARY CADETS

LITTLE CLARA (NOEL ROSSANA) IN "THE NUTCRACKER" WATCHES THE NUTCRACKER PRINCE DANCING WITH THE SNOW QUEEN (ANTON DOLIN AND ALICIA MARKOVA)

Action photograph by Roger Wood

Comedy and Tragedy

It is usually in comedy that children appear in ballet —in a production, for instance, like Ashton's *Les Sirènes*, where Edwardian boys and girls bowled hoops on the Riviera sand, and went sailing on a choppy Mediterranean sea; or Lichine's *Graduation Ball*, in which an irresistible young lady with wired-out pigtails frolics among her more grown-up schoolfellows; while in *Peter and the Wolf* the entire action depends on the resourcefulness and agility of the intrepid Peter. But they have a more serious place. There is the young Tregennis in *The Haunted Ballroom*, who acts as a prologue and epilogue to that strange tragedy; there are the children in de Valois's *Orpheus and Eurydice*, whose pert, gay games served as a contrast to the sad return of Eurydice to Hades. There is the little girl whose innocent play with her parents lights the dark path of Everyman. There are the vivid and convincing slum children in *Miracle in the Gorbals*, who help to create a complete picture of a modern community.

Some dancers of children's roles

Children in Ballet all seem to walk in slightly ungainly fashion, and stand with feet apart; they clap their hands with joy, their knees and elbows are emphasised and awkward, they bob up and down when they are excited, they drag their feet in disappointment. They seem to be divided mainly into two sections—the shy and the forward. Their basic actions and reactions have a distinct family resemblance; so that it is to the dancer who plays them that they owe their subtle individuality. They differ from each other more by reason of their interpreters' personalities than through the pattern of their choreography.

Sometimes the dancers who play them are in reality little more than children, as Lydia Lopokova was when she danced Clara in *The Nutcracker*, or Alicia Markova when she played a Russian child in *La Boutique Fantasque*. Many well-known English dancers made early appearances in some such part—one remembers Julia Farron, for instance, as Clara, or Margaret Bolam (now Dale) as the outspoken child in *The Emperor's New Clothes*; while Margot Fonteyn, as everyone knows, played young Tregennis as one of her first solo parts when she was only fifteen.

A Great Performance by a Child

Perhaps the most haunting memory conjured up by the thought of children in ballet is that of little Janine Charrat in the French film, *La Mort du Cygnes*. In her performance this thin, graceful child, so typical of many pupils of dancing schools throughout the world, captured all the earnest concentration, the heroine-worship, the unconscious humour, and the fierce rivalry that makes up the life of the budding ballet-dancer; while her actual dancing showed, exquisitely, how the awkwardness of the growing child changes, under the discipline of the classroom, into the familiar poetry of the clsssical dance.

Balletomane's Bookshelf

Ballet for Film and Television. By A. H. Franks. (Pitman, 15s.).

This book is a remarkable exposition of two vexed aspects of ballet in the writing of which Mr. Franks, with his clear, beautiful and unprejudiced prose, dissects the subject and leaves us with the bare bones to ponder upon. For the serious balletomane here is a mine of information and much food for thought; for the professional engaged in any connection with either of these two branches of ballet production there is a wealth of analysis which, if taken to heart and acted upon, could contribute to the betterment of future ballet films and teleballet programmes.

For the 'fan' enthusiast Mr. Franks has thoughtfully included a remarkably large number of photographs for a book so reasonably priced, and, while all these pictures are selected for their use in illustrating the text rather than for their "glamour", they are yet of sufficiently popular a nature to delight all types of ballet lovers.

Of particular interest to balletomanes, perhaps, is the fifth chapter, headed "Facilities", in which the author gives full and practical advice, even to the inclusion of rough estimates of costs, to members of clubs and societies who might be interested in presenting a ballet-film show.

For those anxious further to pursue the subject of screened ballet this book is concluded by a comprehensive list of suggested literature. LISA GORDON SMITH.

Dancers and Critics. Edited by Cyril Swinson. (A. and C. Black, 7s. 6d.).

In this fascinating little volume Mr. Swinson has assembled thirteen essays in which French, American and English critics discuss their individual approaches to the criticism of ballet and apply their conclusions to the dancer of their choice. Because the length and subject matter of the essays are so closely prescribed, interest centres on the individual treatment of the theme by each writer and the effect of reading the book right through is similar to that experienced by an examiner faced with a set of examination papers in which thirteen people all answer the same questions in their highly individual ways.

None of the essays reveals any very startling information about either the craft of ballet criticism or the qualities of the dancers discussed but they do reveal a tremendous amount about the writers. Consider the essays dispassionately, forgetting all you previously knew about writer or dancer, and I think you will soon decide which qualities belong to each critic; indeed one of the most attractive aspects of this book is that it presents a mixed bag of beliefs, enthusiasms, styles.

Take the starting-off point, for example. Mr. Beaumont examines the duties of a critic with such thoroughness and care that he produces a blueprint for his colleagues but leaves himself no room to mention the dancer of his choice and has to make amends by dedicating the essay to Margot Fonteyn. Another critic, on the other hand, begins the essay with a pronunciamento about the dancer chosen. And yet fundamentally there is fairly general agreement about the standards by which a critic judges his dancer; it is in the *application* of these standards that we all continually argue and disagree.

Were I an examiner I should have to disqualify Pierre Michaut for not strictly answering the question —but his account of Nina Vyroubova is one of the most interesting sections in the book. I might also quarrel with Miss Brahms on account of her baudekin style but she more than offsets this by being the only critic to capture in words something of the impression made by her "wilful, gifted, subject", Jean Babilée, when he is actually dancing. In so doing she achieves the rarest feat of ballet criticism.

I have no room to discuss each essay in detail or even to mention each critic's basic argument Like Mr. Swinson, I regret the absence of Denby and Buckle and I should have liked a contribution from Miss de Zoete as well. A companion volume with a slightly different theme—say "Choreographers and Critics" —could be equally fascinating. MARY CLARKE.

Margot Fonteyn. A book of Photographs by Gordon Anthony. (Phoenix House Ltd., 12s. 6d.)

This latest book by Gordon Anthony has plainly been a labour of love. Here are 60 photographs of England's great prima ballerina in ballets ranging from the 1934 *Haunted Ballroom* to the 1950 *Sleeping Beauty*. Dare I suggest that the first (and my favourite) picture is not, however, of a fourteen year old Margot Fontes as the Young Master of Tregennis but of our beloved Margot Fonteyn of today as she appeared at the 21st Birthday performance at Sadler's Wells last May? In this book one can contrast her first appearances in such ballets as *The Sleeping Beauty*, *Giselle*, *Swan Lake* and *Apparitions* with her matured present-day presentations of the same roles. Everyone will regret the gap of four years during which Mr. Anthony left ballet photography but, as Mr. Anthony explains, this is his own personal record, so we must look elsewhere for remembrances of certain performances not commemorated here.

Not all the photographs are of equal merit, some of the touching-up is clumsy, but the best of them are worthy of their subject. Mr. Anthony makes his own comments on each picture, and Miss de Valois has written a most charming and appreciative introduction. P.W.M.

Photograph by Walter E. Owen

MARJORIE TALLCHIEF, BALLERINA OF THE GRAND BALLET DE MARQUIS DE CUEVAS, WITH HER SISTER MARIA TALLCHIEF, BALLERINA OF THE NEW YORK CITY BALLET. THE OCCASION WAS A PARTY TO CELEBRATE THE APPEARANCE IN AMERICA OF THE GRAND BALLET

BALLET ON RECORD

SINCE writing my last record review for *Ballet Today* there has been an echo in this country of the great wax revolution of the Americas.

By courtesy of the Decca Company we are now in the first rounds of the to-the-death three speeds battle. Decca's 33 r.p.m. is now battling with the normal 78 r.p.m. and soon the tiny 45's will be contesting. Or is this too technical?

Until now the discs manufactured in this country have all been grooved at the normal rate of 78 revolutions per minute; that is the ordinary three minute lasting 10 inch discs and the five or six minute 12 inch. With the speed of revolving on the turntable cut to a third of its normal, a 10 inch disc—an " L.P."—runs continuously for over fifteen minutes. It can run to half an hour. This, obviously, is a major development.

A full symphony, a half hour air programme, or . . . . to the point, a full ballet suite. Without interruption, without handling. One single disc in place of two, three or four as of old. And, the V discs, the dubbed transcriptions, the L.P.s . . . are of unbreakable vinylite.

Most important L.P. issue so far from Decca, from a ballet standpoint, is undoubtedly the Ansermet *Petrouchka*. With the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Ansermet conducts this Stravinsky score with the fire —and pathos—essential. (Decco LXT 2502). This suite normally takes up ten 12 inch sides, five records.

For those who are as yet unadapted—financially the adoption of L.P. is, initially, expensive—this set has just been issued on standard Decca (AX 328 to 332).

On two 10 inch L.P.s, the full *Les Sylphides* is issued. My love for *Les Sylphides* grows with every audition, if not with every staging.

Hackneyed as it may be, *Les Sylphides* is the perfect ballet music that neither concerto nor symphonic thefts can ever match. There is something of the total spirit of ballet itself in the music. Chopin captures the dance integral as the strictly ballet composer so often failed to do. I find, at every playing, that my eyes close their lids upon the memory of dancers I have seen, and those I have never seen and never will. I find something infinite about *Les Sylphides* that the ballet around me has not suspected.

As a lover of ballet, it is in music such as this that I find my mistress. And if she is a dream of the past and the even better future, and the work around me is real . . . them let me dream.

A rival set of *Les Sylphides*, by the New York Philharmonic Symphony under Efrem Kurtz, occupies three 12 inch discs (Columbia DX 1682-3-4, or automatic couplings DX 8354-5-6).

The recent printing dispute has thrown the companies out of gear and this HMV set has not yet arrived for my turntable. Its major virtue today will lie in the fact that it is "standard", for use on your present reproducer. Also issued on HMV is the Act V ballet music from Gounod's *Faust* (HMV C 4028-29-30, autos. C 7807-8-9).

Other L.P.s include that of *Sylvia*, and two sets to be expected are Ravel's *Daphnis and Chloe* by the Philadelphia under Eugene Ormandy, and Schonberg's *Verklarte Nacht* (*Pillar of Fire*) by the same conductor and orchestra. In the United States these two suites are on one disc! *Sylvia* is obtainable on L.P. by the Orchestre de la Societé des Concerts du Conservatoire de Paris under Roger Desormière (Decca LM 4501). Delibes' *Coppélia* (Decca LM 4501) is by the same orchestra and also under the Desormière baton.

As a financial finish, I would mention that you can convert your present radiogram or player for as little as ten pounds, or—this for readers not actively connected with ballet or art in any form—as much as four hundred pounds!

WALTER GORE AND PAULA HINTON IN GORE'S "BARTLEMAS DANCES" RECENTLY TELEVISED

B.B.C. photograph

TELEVISION SURVEY

By LISA GORDON SMITH

ON October 18th Philip Bate presented The Continental Ballet in a television programme of which the *pièce de resistance* was intended to be Molly Lake's comedy ballet *The Fall from Grace*.

It was unfortunate that this did not quite "jell", for the story on which the ballet is based promised a treat to all but those elect and selective beings (to whose rarefied heights we regret we dare not rise for fear of nose-bleeding) who eschew and condemn all humour in ballet on the grounds that if it is Funny it cannot be Art.

In *The Fall from Grace* a family rejoicing in the promising name of Moggeridge go for a picnic in a fairy glade near Wapping Old Stairs. The fairies in residence are of the most dubious origins, and their buxom Queen, personified by Angela Bayley, successfully seduces Grandpa Moggeridge (Travis Kemp) while the rest of the family are sleeping off the effects of that kind of lunch habitually consumed at picnics by this hardy race.

The public will be relieved to know that Grandpa ultimately makes an Honest Fairy of Blossom, with the aid of a property wedding veil, while the family, accompanied by Cornelius the Dog (who, in the manner of his tribe, has spannered the works good and proper throughout), return home to put the disgraced Grandpa's picture face-to-the-wall.

This ballet was originally choreographed for stage performance in which medium it may have been most successful. On television, however, there was a tendency for too many to be doing too much in opposite corners of the screen and the effect was lost in a certain amount of confusion.

The "high spot" of the evening was undoubtedly the performance by Walter Gore and Paula Hinton of the former's enchanting *Bartlemas Dances* which might have been, although it was not, created especially for television.

On October 25th Christian Simpson produced Leonard Boucher's first television ballet *Barrack Square*. Despite the fact that the evening opened badly with a technical hitch which caused the programme to run nearly thirty minutes late and which seemed to have

left a few repercussions in the transmission, this experiment was extremely interesting and, on the whole, very successful.

Leonard Boucher decided to set his ballet within a slight play of which it formed an integral and major part, and achieved considerably more than the usual amount of coherence of atmosphere by writing the script himself. The whole contained a great deal of philosophy, comfort and humour as well as some delightful moments of dancing, particularly from Domini Callaghan. The costumes were designed by Leonard Boucher himself; a creditable fact which did not receive the amount of publicity which the results warranted.

Had not the potentially good idea of providing more dancing space by putting the orchestra in another studio resulted, on a few occasions, in some unplanned moments of embarrassing moments of silence, there would have been little to complain of in this production. It showed a promise and originality which augur well for future occasions.

The second *Ballet for Beginners* on November 6th followed the trusted plan of the previous series, with the added zest of experience. Much that is valuable about the technique of the arms and the head was ably dealt with and a demonstration sample from *Les Sylphides* was one of the best productions of this much maligned ballet to be seen for a very long time.

Editorial Comment—(*continued from page* 3)

went voluntarily because they believed she could give them help, not only with their technique but with their interpretation of roles, which was unobtainable anywhere else.

Vera Volkova takes with her the love of everyone in the ballet world. Our thoughts will follow her in this new, important task upon which she is now embarking.

Teresa and Luisillo

These two young Mexican dancers were the biggest success of the sensational Carmen Amaya season at the Princes Theatre nearly two years ago. They made their re-appearance on November 28th at the Saville Theatre for a three-week season as stars of their own company. Teresa proved to have developed considerably as artist and dancer while Luisillo was as dynamic as ever. All their dances, exciting as they each are in themselves, are in one mood of fierce amorousness and this leads to monotony even when they are interspersed with some very well-presented dances and songs by the rest of the company. The music, too, was of the "afternoon tea in the Palm Court" variety played with a thin stridency which is, however, exactly as one hears it on Spanish records and so probably was less worrying to the dancers than to the audience. There was in addition a dead-pan humorist of a guitarist who made some astonishing noises on his instrument and occasionally flung glances of utter contempt at us all. On the first night Luisillo neutralised many of his effects by some painful "mugging" and exaggerated swoops and glides. However, he showed his good sense by taking to heart the critics' comments next day, toned down this aspect of his work and revealed himself once again as the fine artist we remembered with such admiration.

Spanish dancing of all types is so richly colourful that it lends itself more easily to the stage than any other traditional dancing. I must, however, protest that this was not Spanish *Ballet* as announced by the posters. Dancing does not become Ballet simply by putting several people on the stage and having them dance together.

Teresa and Luisillo will be returning to London for a further season at the Prince's Theatre in February and there is a strong possibility that they will also be making a film this year. P.W.M.

Stravinsky's "Soldier's Tale"

The Editor,
Ballet Today.

Madam,

Mr. J. F. McDougall's article on the production of *The Soldier's Tale* last summer in Salzburg should not be allowed to go without comment. Indeed, certain misstatements need correction.

In the first place, it is misleading to say that this work's history "dates from the lean years of the Diaghilev Company". Its composition had nothing to do with Diaghilev or his Russian Ballet, but was the result of a collaboration between Stravinsky and Ramuz in Switzerland towards the end of the first World War; it was produced at Lausanne in September 1918 with a locally recruited cast; and Diaghilev, when his attention was drawn to it some time later, refused to show any interest in it at all. Apparently he considered Stravinsky guilty of a vital error of judgment in daring to create a work for the stage outside the ambit of his Russian ballet.

Secondly, the score is written for violin, double-bass, clarinet, bassoon, cornet, trombone and percussion—not the strange mixture Mr. McDougall prescribed, which included flute and French horn.

Mr. McDougall speaks of *The Soldier's Tale* as a "ballet"; but he appreciates the peculiar difficulty of classifying this work, for he draws attention to the fact that "only a part of the Salzburg performance was danced". The late Dr. Loewenberg included *The*

dier's Tale in his *Annals of Opera*, though he admitted was "very far from being an opera in the traditional se of the word". Stravinsky and Ramuz, however, re quite clear what they had written—it was "*The dier's Tale* to be read, played and danced". The m was the outcome of wartime necessity; but in ir attempt to economise and simplify, they created work that turned out to be extremely complicated to oduce. The tale is read by a reader speaking with l without musical accompaniment; the action is yed by two actors, who have to mime as well as to ak their parts (the Soldier and the Devil); there e four dance numbers for two roles (the Princess d the Devil); and the score needs seven brilliant loists to interpret it.

Although experience has shown that it is nearly ways unsatisfactory on the stage, the work continues exercise a peculiar fascination, partly because of e successful way it evades being pigeon-holed. It is t an opera, nor a ballet, nor a play, nor a mime, r a masque, nor a lecture-recital. Perhaps the uest description would be to call it a melodrama. any case, one is grateful for Mr. McDougall's record what must have been an unique production, with s open-air setting and the artificial lake across which e Devil made his entry rowing a skiff.

Yours, etc.,
ERIC WALTER WHITE.

Mr. McDougall replies: "*Ballet Today* readers and yself can only be grateful to Mr. White, an authority n Stravinsky, for his scholarly footnotes to my article. saying the 'ballet' dated from the lean years of e Diaghilev company I had in mind its composition utside the ambit of the Russian ballet, but since he isinterpreted it the phrase was obviously misleading nd ambiguous. My description of the score can only e traced to my faulty translation from the German rogramme. I tried to indicate the difficulty of lassifying the work by using quotes around the word ballet'."

Here and There

Rambert to the Rescue

When Alicia Markova was suddenly stricken with gastric influenza on the day of a matinee performance of *Giselle* at the Stoll Theatre, Sally Gilmour was given permission by the Drury Lane management to appear at the neighbouring theatre. She had not danced in this ballet since Australia, two years ago, but she rehearsed with Anton Dolin the whole morning, supervised by Madame Rambert, gave a memorable performance which earned her cheers in the afternoon and appeared as usual at Drury Lane in the evening. Another Rambert ballerina stepped into the breach for the Monday performance. Paula Hinton's feat was even more remarkable, for she had only ever danced the first act for Television a few months ago and actually learned the whole of the second on Monday, again under Madame Rambert's watchful eye.

Ballet Rambert Itinerary

Incidentally Andrée Howard's *Mermaid* has recently been revived with great success by this company with Mary Munro in the name part. Here is their tour for January:

January 15th. Theatre Royal, York.
January 22nd. Grand Theatre, Blackpool.
January 29th. Garrick Theatre, Southport.

Festival of Britain, 1951

A leaflet outlining the arrangements for the London Season of the Arts in May and June has just been issued and copies, either singly or in bulk, can be obtained by writing to Duncan Guthrie, Arts Council Representative, Festival of Britain, 1951, 2 Savoy Court, London, W.C.2. It gives full details of some two hundred and fifty concerts, more than forty special art exhibitions as well as many first night and gala performances of theatre, opera and ballet. P.W.M.

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